

# Extended Learning Experiences

Extended learning refers to the knowledge and experience that can be gained in a work setting through such activities as job shadowing, cooperative education and internships. These glimpses into the real world help individuals make more informed education and career decisions.

Identify some of the career fields that do – or don't – fit you before you begin your formal career preparation. Use one or more of the following options to learn something about a career field or place of employment, and about the work environments and work tasks that appeal to you.

Career exploration can lead to paid employment! Career investigation experiences in the community can allow you to connect with prospective employers who may want to hire you in the future or recommend you to other employers.

## AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is your chance to put your ideals into action while learning new skills, making new connections, and earning money to pay for college. As an AmeriCorps member (17 years or older) you can:

- Fight illiteracy, teach computer skills, tutor and mentor disadvantaged youth
- Build affordable housing or work to improve health services
- Clean parks and streams, or help communities respond to disasters

For more information, go to [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)

## Cooperative (Co-op) Education

Cooperative education is a short-term job placement directly related to a student's classroom instruction in career and technical education. It is usually the final experience for the student who has "majored" in one occupational preparation program. As a co-op student you:

- Are monitored and evaluated by your instructor and your employer.
- Receive a grade for the co-op experience.
- May be paid by the employer.

Is co-op an option for you? Talk to your career and technical education instructor.

## Internships

Like Cooperative Education, an internship is a work experience with academic credit, but internships are generally at the post-secondary level. Most internships are paid positions.

• Employers may post internships and jobs at the TeamND website at [www.teamnd.org](http://www.teamnd.org). Students at any of the state's public and private postsecondary campuses can access the information.

• Students who are interested in internship opportunities within ND companies can submit an Operation Intern application to the ND Department of Commerce. Information and forms can be found at <http://www.workforce.nd.gov/programs/operation-intern>.

## Job Shadowing/Mentoring

A Job Shadowing or Mentoring opportunity pairs a student with a person who does the kind of work the student wants to explore. While job shadows generally last 2-8 hours and are typically limited to observing the worker; mentoring is an ongoing relationship between a worker and a student. Both opportunities offer the student:

- A first-hand look at the occupation
- An opportunity to observe and ask questions
- A possible "contact" in the field of work

Interested? Talk with your career development counselor or school counselor, or with a career and technical education instructor.

## Part-Time Jobs/Summer Employment

Work during the summer? Or, work part-time during the school year? What's up with that?

Here are the "real" benefits:

- The opportunity to explore careers
- Work experiences to build your resume
- Find what employers look for in workers – and develop those "work habits"
- Money! A little for now, and some to save for college later.

Interested? Talk with friends (your parents' friends and your own), as well as with teachers and school counselors. Check out [www.FindJobsND.com](http://www.FindJobsND.com) or search for summer jobs on-line.

## Service Learning/Volunteer Service

Service Learning and Volunteer Service are unpaid work experiences that focus on meeting a community need.

- Service Learning is planned as a class activity within a specific class or instructional program. Students apply what they learn in class to a real-life situation in the community.
- Volunteer Service is usually planned by an individual and may or may not be connected to a specific class the individual is taking.

Keep records of all volunteer and/or service learning experiences! This is valuable "experience" to list on resumes and job applications!

## Summer Career Exploration Opportunities

Each summer career exploration opportunities are offered by business and industry in partnership with secondary and post-secondary institutions. These types of career exploration opportunities may allow students to:

- Learn and practice technical skills used in industry
- Find out about education and other requirements for employment
- Explore a wide variety of career options
- Earn high school or college credit

Talk with your career development counselor or school counselor, or a career and technical education instructor, to learn about opportunities in your area.

## Work Simulations/School-Based Businesses

Work Simulations and School-Based Businesses copy the environment and experiences a person might have on the job.

- Work Simulations are closely tied to a specific course or program, usually a career and technical education program.
- School-Based Businesses generally operate for longer periods of time than a work simulation, and may be less closely tied to a specific course.

Both kinds of experiences enable students to learn about work tasks, the working environment, and some of the skills that are needed for success

Which of these career investigation experiences are available to you? Ask your CTE instructor, your school counselor or career development counselor, the student services office, Job Service, or the Department of Commerce – and don't forget to look for opportunities on your own!